

LOVE'S LAW AND LIFE

NO. 1932

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*"If you love Me, keep My commandments."
John 14:15.*

THIS is a chapter singularly full of certainties, and remarkably studded with "*ifs*." Concerning most of the great things in it there never can be an "if," and yet "if" comes up, I think, no less than seven times in the chapter, and "if," too, not about trifles, but about the most solemn subjects. It is, perhaps, worthy of mention that with each of these "ifs" there is something connected, as following out of it, or appearing to be involved in it, or connected with it.

Look at the second verse. "In my Father's house are many mansions: *if* it were not so, I would have told you." If there had been no place for us in the glory land Jesus would have told us. If any truth which had not been revealed would have made our hope a folly, our Lord Jesus would have warned us of it, for He has not come to lure us into a fool's paradise, and at the last deceive us. He will tell us all that it is necessary for us to know in order to a wise faith and a sure hope. The Lord has not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; He has not spoken in contradiction of His revealed word. Nothing in His secret decrees or hidden designs can shake our confidence, or darken our expectation. "*If* it were not so, I would have told you." Had there been a secret thing which would have injured your prospects, it should have been dragged to light, that you might not be deceived, for the Lord Jesus has no desire to win disciples by the suppression of distasteful truth. If there were anything yet to be revealed which would render your hope a delusion at the end, you should have been made acquainted with it; Jesus Himself would break the sad news to you; He would not leave you to be horrified by finding it out for yourselves; He kindly declares, "I would have told you."

Notice the third verse. Again we meet with "if," and its consequence. "*If* I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." If the Lord Jesus should go away (and this is a supposition no longer, for He has gone), then He would return again in due time. Since He *has* gone, He will come again, for He has made the one to depend on the other. We make no question that He went up into Heaven, for He rose from out the circle of His followers and they saw Him as He went up into Heaven. They had no sort of doubt as to the fact that the cloud received Him out of their sight, and moreover, they received assurance out of Heaven, by an angelic messenger, that, "He shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven." "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself." His going Home pledges Him to come and compels us to look for Him!

The next "if" comes at *the beginning of the seventh verse*, "*If* you had known Me, you should have known My Father also." If we really know the Lord Christ, we know God. In fact, there is no knowing God aright except through His Son Jesus. It is evidently true that men do not long hold to theism pure and simple. If our scientific men get away from the Christ, the incarnate God, before long they drift away from God altogether. They begin to slide down the mountain when they quit the incarnate Deity, and there is no more a foothold to stop them. No man comes to the Father but by the Son, and no man long keeps to the Father who does not keep to his faith in the Son. Those who know Christ know God, but those who are ignorant of the Savior are ignorant of God, however much they may pride themselves upon their religion. They may know another god, but the only living and true God is unknown save by those who receive Jesus. The divine Fatherhood, of which we hear so much in certain quarters, is only to be seen through the window of incarnation and sacrifice. We must see Jesus before we can gain even so

much as a glimpse at the Infinite, the Incomprehensible, and the Invisible. God comes not within finite perception till He enters human flesh, and there we behold His glory, full of grace and truth.

The next variety of "if" you will find a little farther down in the chapter, namely, *in the fourteenth verse*, "If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." The "if" in this case involves an uncertainty about our prayers, if an uncertainty at all. Taking it for granted that we ask mercies in the name of Jesus, a glorious certainty is linked thereto. Jesus says, "I will do it." Here our Lord speaks after a sovereign style. We may not say, "I will," but the "I wills" pertain to Christ. He can answer, and He has the right to answer, and therefore He says without reservation, "I will." "If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." Oh that we might put the first "if" out of court by continually petitioning the Lord, and signing our petitions with the name of Jesus! May we be persistent only in prayers to which we are warranted to set that august name, and then boldly using His name and authority, we need be under no apprehension of failure. The great Father in heaven never denies the power of His Son's name; neither does the Son Himself draw back from the keeping of His own pledges. True prayer operates with the same certainty as the laws of nature. "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Oh that we did delight more in the Divine name and character, and then our prayers would always speed to the throne!

Now comes the "if" of our text, of which I will say nothing for the moment. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Something, you see, is to come out of this "if" as out of all the others. *If something, then something*—"If you love me," then carry it out to the legitimate result, "keep My commandments."

You have the next "if" in verse twenty-three, "Jesus answered and said to him, *If a man loves Me, he will keep My words.*" Respect to His wisdom, and obedience to His authority, will grow out of love. "The love of Christ constrains us." We hear that passage often quoted, "The love of Christ ought to constrain us," but that is a corruption of the text; the apostle tells us that it does constrain us, and if it really enters the heart, it will do so. It is an active, moving power, influencing the inner life, and then the external conduct—

*"Tis love that makes our willing feet
In swift obedience move."*

"If a man loves Me, he will keep my words." He will believe in the verbal inspiration of His Lord, he will regard His teaching as infallible; he will attend to it and remember it. More than this, he will by his conduct carry out the words of his Lord, and so keep them in the best possible manner by enshrining them in his daily life.

The chapter almost closes at the twenty-eighth verse by saying, "If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go unto My Father, for My Father is greater than I." Where there is an intelligent love to Christ we rejoice in His gains even though we ourselves appear to be losers thereby. The corporeal absence of our Lord from our midst might seem to be a great loss to us, but we rejoice in it because it is for His own greater glory. If He is enthroned in glory, we dare not lament His absence. Our love agrees to His departure, yes, rejoices in it, for anything which conduces to His exaltation is sweet to us. Let us at this moment, because we love Him, rejoice that He has gone to the Father.

So you see the chapter, if you read it, though enriched with heavenly certainties, is yet besprinkled with "ifs." Like little pools of sparkling water among the ever abiding rocks, these "ifs" gleam in the light of heaven, and refresh us even to look upon them.

Let us now think of our own text, and may the Holy Spirit lead us into the secret chambers of it! "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

The present "if" is a serious one. Let that stand as our first head. Secondly, *the test which is added concerning it is a very judicious one*, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." In the third place, I will give you the reading of the Revised Version, and say, *that test will be endured by love*, for the words may be interpreted—"If you love Me, you will keep my commandments." Obedience will follow upon love as a matter of certainty.

I. To begin, then, THE "IF" IN OUR TEXT IS A VERY SERIOUS ONE. It goes to the very root of the matter. Love belongs to the heart, and every surgeon will tell you that a disease of the heart may not be trifled with. A clever doctor said to me, "I feel at my ease with any matter if it does not touch the head or the heart." Solomon bids us keep the heart with all diligence, "for out of it are the issues of life."

If the mainspring fails, all the works of a watch refuse to act. We cannot, therefore, think little of a question which concerns our love, for it deals with a vital part. O friends, I hope there is no question about our love to Jesus.

Observe how our Savior puts this “*if*” concerning love, in such a way as to teach us that *love must be prior to obedience*. The text is not, “Keep My commandments, and then love Me.” No, we do not expect pure streams till the fountain is cleansed. Nor does He say—“Keep My commandments, and love Me at the same time,” as two separate things, although that might in a measure correspond with truth. But love is put first, because it is first in importance and first in experience. “If you love Me”—we must begin with love; then “keep My commandments.” Obedience must have love for its mother, nurse, and food. The essence of obedience lies in the hearty love which prompts the deed rather than in the deed itself. I can conceive it possible that a man might, in his outward life, keep Christ’s commandments, and yet might never keep them at all so as to be accepted before God. If he became obedient by compulsion, but would have disobeyed if he dared, then his heart was not right before God, and his actions were of little worth. The commandments are to be kept out of love to Him who gave them. In obedience, to love is to live; if we love Christ we live Christ. Love to the person of our Lord is the very salt of our sacrifices. To put it most practically—I often say to myself, “Today I have performed all the duties of my office, but have I been careful to abide in my Lord’s love? I have not failed as to doing all that was possible to me; I have gone from early morning till late at night, packing as much work as possible into every hour, and trying to do it with all my heart. But have I, after all, done this as unto the Lord and for His sake?” I tremble lest I should serve God merely because I happen to be a minister and am called to preach His word, or because the natural routine of the day carries me through it. I am concerned that I may be impelled by no force but the love of Jesus. This fear often humbles me in the dust, and prevents all glorying in what I have done. Only as we love our Lord can our obedience be true and acceptable. The main care of our lives should be to do right, and to do it because we love the Lord. We must walk before the Lord as Abraham did, and with the Lord as Enoch did. Unless we are under the constant constraint of love to the Lord Jesus Christ we shall fail terribly—

*“Knowledge, alas! is all in vain,
And all in vain our fear,
In vain our labor and our pain
If love be absent there.”*

See, dear friends, how inward true religion is; how far it exceeds all external formalism! How deep is the seat of true grace! You cannot hope to do that which Christ can smile upon until your heart is renewed. A heart at enmity with God cannot be made acceptable by mere acts of piety. It is not what your hands are doing, nor even what your lips are saying; the main thing is what your heart is meaning and intending. Which way are your affections tending? The great flywheel which moves the whole machinery of life is fixed in the heart; hence this is the most important of all suggestions—“If you love Me.” “If you love Me” is a searching sound. I start as I hear it. He that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation produces as the first fruit of his faith love to Christ; this must be in us and abound, or nothing is right. Packed away within that box of sweets called “love” you shall find every holy thing, but if you have no love, what have you? Though you wear your fingers to the bone with service, weep your eyes out with repentance, make your knees hard with kneeling, and dry your throat with shouting, yet if the heart does not beat with love your religion falls to the ground like a withered leaf in autumn. Love is the chief jewel in the bracelet of obedience. Hear the text, and mark it well, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

O sirs, what a mass of religion is cast out as worthless by this text! Men may keep on going to church and going to chapel, and they may be religious, yes, throughout a whole life, and apparently, they may be blameless in their moral conduct, and yet there may be nothing in them, because there is no love to the ever-blessed Christ at the bottom of the profession. When the heathen killed their sacrifices in order to prophesy future events from the entrails, the worst sign they ever got was when the priest, after searching into the victim, could not find a heart; or if that heart was small and shriveled. The soothsayers always declared that this omen was the sure sign of calamity. All the signs were evil if the heart of the offering was absent or deficient. It is so in very deed with religion and with each religious person. He that searches us searches principally our hearts. He who tries mankind tries chiefly the reins of the children of men. The Master is in our midst tonight, walking down these aisles with noiseless tread, girt

about the paps with a golden girdle, and robed in snow-white garments down to His feet. See, He stops before each one of us, and gently asks, "Do you love Me?" Three times He repeats the question. He waits for an answer. It is a vital question; do not refuse a reply. Oh that the Spirit of the Lord may enable you to answer in sincerity and truth, and say, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You!"

This matter of love to Jesus is put prior to every other because *it is the best reason for our obedience to Him*. Notice, "If you love *Me*, keep *My* commandments." Personal affection will produce personal obedience. Do you not see the drift of the words? The blessed Jesus says, "If you love *Me*, keep *My* commandments," because truly, operative love is mainly love to a person, and love to our Lord's person begets obedience to His precepts. There are some men for whom you would do anything; you will to yield to their will. If such a person were to say to you, "Do this," you would do it without question. Perhaps he stands to you in the relation of master, and you are his willing servant. Perhaps he is a venerated friend, and because you esteem and love him, his word is law to you. The Savior may much more safely than any other, be installed in such a position. From the throne of your affections He says, "If you love *Me*—if really your hearts go out to *Me*—then let *My* word be a commandment; let *My* commandment be kept in your memory, and then further kept by being observed in your life." So you see the reason why the Master begins with the heart—because there is no hope of obedience to Him in our actions, unless He is enshrined in our affections. This is the spring and source of all holy living—love to the Holy One. Dear friends, have you been captured by the beauties of Jesus, and are you held in a divine captivity to the adorable person of your redeeming Lord? Then you have within you the impulse which constrains you to keep His commandments.

It was greatly needful for our Lord thus to address His disciples. Yes, it was necessary to speak thus even to the apostles. He says to the chosen twelve, "If you love *Me*." We should never have doubted one of them. We now know by the result that one of them was a traitor to his Lord, and sold Him for pieces of silver, but no one suspected him for he seemed as loyal as any one of them. Ah! If that question, "If you love *Me*," needed to be raised in the sacred college of the twelve, much more must it be allowed to sift our churches, and to test ourselves. Brethren, this word is exceedingly needful, in the present assembly; hear its voice—"If you love *Me*." The mixed multitude here gathered together may be compared to the heap on the threshing floor, and there is need of the winnowing fan. Perhaps you have almost taken it for granted that you love Jesus; but it must not be taken for granted. Some of you have been born in a religious atmosphere, you have lived in the midst of godly people, and you have never been out into the wicked world to be tempted by its follies; therefore you come to an immediate conclusion that you must assuredly love the Lord. This is unwise and perilous. Never glory in armor which you have not tested, nor rejoice in love to Christ which has not sustained trial. What an awful thing if you should be deceived and mistaken! It is most kind of the Savior to raise a question about your love, and thus give you an opportunity of examining yourself and seeing whether you are right at heart. It will be far better for you to err upon the side of too great anxiety than on that of carnal security. To be afraid that you are wrong, and so to make sure of being right, will bring you to a far better end than being sure that you are right, and therefore, refusing to look into the ground of your hope. I would have you fully assured of your love to Jesus, but I would not have you deceived by a belief that you love Him if you do not. Lord, search us and try us!

Remember, if any man loves not the Lord Jesus Christ he will be *anathema Maranatha*, cursed at His coming. This applies to every man, even though he is most eminent. An apostle turned out to be a son of perdition—may not you? Every man, even though he is a learned bishop, or a popular pastor, or a renowned evangelist, or a venerable elder, or an active deacon, or the most ancient member of the most orthodox assembly, may yet turn out to be no lover of the Lord. Though he has gathered to break bread in the sacred name with a select company, yet if he does not truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, the curse rests upon him, whoever he may be. So let us take from the Master's lips the heart-searching word at this time, "If you love *Me*, keep *My* commandments." Let us take it personally home, as if addressed to each one of us personally and alone.

While considering the text, let each one view himself apart. What have you to do in this matter with keeping the vineyards of others? See to your own hearts. The text does not say, "If the church loves *Me*," or, "If such-and-such a minister loves *Me*," or, "If your brothers love *Me*," no, but it is, "If *you* love *Me*, keep *My* commandments." The most important question for each one to answer is that which

concerns his personal attachment to his Redeemer, and the personal obedience which comes out of it. I press this inquiry upon each one. It may seem a trite and commonplace question, but it needs to be put again and again before all in our congregations. The preacher needs to be thus questioned; he gets into the habit of reading his Bible for other people. The Sunday school teacher needs this inquiry; he also is apt to study the Scriptures rather for his class than for himself. We all need the truth to come home to us with personal and forcible application, for we are always inclined to shift unpleasant inquiries upon others. In the case of very deaf people, when they hold up their horns we speak right down into them; and I wish to speak home pointedly to each one of you at this time. Let the text sound into your individual ear and heart; "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

The question is answerable, however. It was put to the apostles, and they could answer it. Peter spoke as all the eleven would have done when he said, "You know that I love You." It is not a question concerning mysteries out of range and beyond judgement; it deals with a plain matter of fact. A man may know whether he loves the Lord or not, and he ought to know. He who is jealous of himself, and is, therefore, half afraid to speak positively, may all the more truly be a lover of the Lord. Holy caution may raise a question where the answer is far more certain than in the breasts of those who never even make the inquiry because they are carnally secure. Do not be content with merely longing to love Jesus, or with longing to know whether you love Him. Not to know whether you love the Lord Jesus is a state of mind so dangerous that I exhort you never to go to sleep until you have escaped from it. A man has no right to smile—I had almost said, he has no right either to eat bread or drink water so long as that question hangs in the balances. It ought to be decided. It can be decided. It can be decided at once. Not love Jesus? It is better for me not to live than not to love *Him*. Not love Christ? May the terrible fact never be hidden from my weeping eyes! Perhaps the dread discovery may drive me to better things. If I do love my Lord I can never rest with the shadow of a doubt darkening the life of my love. A question on such a matter is unbearable—

*"Do not I love You from my soul?
Then let me nothing love:
Dead be my heart to every joy,
When Jesus cannot move.
Would not my heart pour forth its blood
In honor of Your name,
And challenge the cold hand of death
To dampen the immortal flame?
You know I love You, dearest Lord;
But oh, I long to soar
Far from the sphere of mortal joys,
And learn to love You more."*

Brethren, hear the question suggested by this little word "if," consider it well, and rest not until you can say, "I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplication."

So much, then, concerning the serious nature of this "if."

II. In the second place let me observe that THE TEST WHICH IS PROPOSED IN THE TEXT IS A VERY JUDICIOUS ONE. "If you love Me, *keep My commandments*." This is the best proof of love.

The test indicated does not suggest a lawless liberty. It is true we are not under the law, but under grace, but yet we are under law to Christ, and if we love Him we are to keep His commandments. Let us never enter into the counsel of those who do not believe that there are any commandments for believers to keep. Those who do away with duty do away with sin, and consequently with the Savior. It is not written—"If you love Me, do whatever you please." Jesus does not say—"So long as you love Me in your hearts, I care nothing about your lives." There is no such doctrine as that between the covers of this holy book. He that loves Christ is the freest man out of heaven, but he is also the most under bonds. He is free, for Christ has loosed his bonds, but he is put under bonds to Christ by grateful love. The love of Christ constrains him henceforth to live to the Lord who loved him, lived for him, died for him, and rose again. No, dear friends, we do not desire a lawless life. He that is not under the law as a power for condemnation yet can say that with his heart he delights in the law of God, he longs after perfect holiness, and in his soul yields hearty homage to the precepts of the Lord Jesus. Love is law; the law of love is the strongest of all laws. Christ has become our Master and King, and His commandments are not grievous.

The text also contains no fanatical challenge. We do not read, "If you love Me, perform some extraordinary act." The test required is not an outburst of extravagance, or an attempt to realize the ambitious project of a fevered brain. Nothing of the kind. Hermits, nuns, and religious mad-caps find no example or precept here. Some persons think that if they love Jesus, they must enter a convent, retire to a cell, dress themselves oddly, or shave their heads. It has been the thought of some men, "If we love Christ we must strip ourselves of everything we possess, put on sackcloth, tie ropes round our waists, and pine in the desert." Others have thought it wise to make effigies of themselves by oddity of dress and behavior. The Savior does not say anything of the kind, but "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Every now and then we find members of our churches who must necessarily leave their trades and their callings to show their love for Jesus; children may starve and wives may pine, but their mad whimsies must be carried out for love of Jesus. Under this influence they rush into all sorts of foolery, and soon ruin their characters because they will not take the advice of sobriety, and cannot be satisfied with the grand test of love which our Lord Himself herein lays down. The text does not condemn these light-headed projects in detail, but it does so in the gross by proposing a far more reasonable test—"If you love Me, keep My commandments." Do not spin theories in your excited brains, and vow that you will do this desperate thing and the other. The probability is that you are not seeking the glory of the Lord, but you want notoriety for yourself. You are aiming at supreme devotion, so that you may become a distinguished person, and that people may talk about your superior saintship. You may even go so far as to court persecution from selfish motives. The Savior, who was wise and knew what was in men, and knew also what would be the surest test of true love to Himself, says, "If you love Me, *keep My commandments.*" This is a much more difficult thing than to follow out the dictates of a crazy brain.

Why does the Savior give us this as a test? I think that one reason is, because it is one which *tests whether you are loving Christ in His true position*, or whether your love is to a Christ of your own making, and your own placing. It is easy to crave a half Christ, and refuse a whole Christ. It is easy also to follow a Christ of your own construction, who is merely an antichrist. The real Christ is so great and glorious that He has a right to give commandments. Moses never used an expression such as our Savior here employs. He might say, "Keep God's commandments," but he would never have said, "Keep *my* commandments." That dear and Divine Person whom we call Master and Lord here says, "Keep *My* commandments." What a commanding person He must be! What lordship He has over His people! How great He is among His saints! If you keep His commandments you are putting Him into the position which He claims. By obedience you own His sovereignty and Godhead, and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." I am afraid that a great many people know a Christ who is meek and lowly, their servant and Savior, but they do not know the *Lord* Jesus Christ. Alas! My friends, such people set up a false Christ. We do not love Jesus at all if He is not our Lord and God. It is all sanctimonious and hypocrisy, this love to Christ which robs Him of His Deity. I abhor that love to Christ which does not make Him King of kings, and Lord of lords. Love Him, and belittle Him! It is absurd. Follow your own will in preference to His will, and then talk of love to Him! Ridiculous! This is but the devil's counterfeit of love, it is a contradiction of all true love. Love is loyal; love crowns its Lord with obedience. If you love Jesus aright, you view His every precept as a divine commandment. You love the true Christ if you love a commanding Christ as well as a saving Christ, and look to Him for the guidance of your life as well as for the pardon of your sin.

This test, again, is very judicious, because *it proves the living presence of the object of your love.* Love always desires to have its object near, and it has a faculty of bringing its object near. If you love anybody, that person may be far away, and yet to your thoughts he is close at hand. Love brings the beloved one so near that the thought of him acts upon its life. A gentleman has faithful servants, he goes away, and leaves his house in their charge; he has gone abroad, and yet he is at home to his servants, for every day their work is done as if he were there to see. He is coming home soon, they hardly know when, but they keep all things in readiness for his return, let it happen when it may. They are not eye-servants, and so they work none the less because he is absent. If he does not see *them*, yet the eyes of their love always see *him*, and therefore they work as if he were at home. Their affection keeps him always near. A dear father is dead, and he has left his property to a son who honors his memory. What does the son do? He is generous, like his father, and when he is asked why, he replies, "I do exactly what I believe my dear father would have done if he had been here." "Why?" "Because I love him."

When a man is dead he lives to those who love him. So the living Christ, who is not dead, but has gone away, is made present to us by our realizing love, and the proof of our love is that Jesus is so present that He constrains our actions, influences our motives, and is the cause of our obedience. Jesus seems to say—"If you love Me, now that I am gone you will do as you would have done if I were still with you, and looking at you. You will continue to keep My commandments, as in My presence."

It is a most judicious test, again, because, by keeping our Lord's commandments, *we are doing that which is most pleasing to Him, and will most glorify Him*. Some enthusiastic Methodist cries—

"Oh, what shall I do my Savior to praise?"

Listen, my brother, if you love your Savior, keep His commandments. This is all you have to do, and a great all too. Among the rest, you may come and be baptized, while you are thus earnest to praise your Lord. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." There is the answer to every rapturous inquiry. Jesus is more glorified by a consistent obedience to His commands than by the most extravagant zeal that we can possibly display in what is only will-worship, because He has never commanded it. If you wish to break the alabaster box, and fill the house with sweet perfume; if you wish to crown His head with rarest gems, the method is before you—"Keep My commandments." You cannot do your Lord so great a favor, or, in the long run, bring to Him so real an honor, as by a complete, continual, hearty obedience to every one of His commandments.

Moreover, the Savior knew, when He bade us try this test, "If you love Me, keep My commandments," that *it would prepare us for honoring and glorifying Him in many other ways*. Read the context, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." You can greatly glorify Christ if you are filled with the Holy Spirit, but you cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if you do not keep Christ's commandments. The Spirit of God as a Comforter will come only to those to whom He comes as a Sanctifier. By making us holy, He will qualify us for being useful. The Savior says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments," because we shall then obtain that divine gift by which we can glorify His name. If there is any service which your love would aspire to, obedience to your Lord is the way to it.

But, indeed, I need not stand here and argue. When a friend is dying, and he asks you to prove your love by such-and-such a deed, he may ask what he wills; you give him *carte blanche*. It may be the simplest thing or the hardest thing, but if he will prescribe it as a test of love, you will not tell him no. If your wife should say to you, "You are going to journey far from me, and I shall not see you again for many days, I beg you therefore to carry my portrait within your watch-case," you would not fail to do so. It would be a simple thing, but it would be sacred to you. Baptism and the Lord's Supper will never be slighted by those whose hearts are fully possessed with love to Jesus. They may seem trifles, but if the Lord Jesus commands them they cannot be neglected. To leave off your wedding ring might be no great crime, and yet no loving wife would do it; even so, none who regard outward ordinances as love tokens will think of neglecting them. Ours is not to ask for reasons, ours is not to dispute about whether the deed is essential or non-essential, ours is to obey right lovingly. Bridegroom of our hearts, say what You will, and we will obey You! If only You will smile and strengthen us, nothing shall be impossible if great, nothing trifling if small.

III. Time has well-near gone, or we would dwell upon the third head, which we must now leave, only praying God to prove the truth of it. The third head was this; TRUE LOVE WILL ENDURE THIS TEST. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." This is the Revised Version, and I hope it will be written out in capitals upon our revised lives! We will obey, we must obey, since we love Him by whom the command is given.

Come then, brothers and sisters, as the time has gone, let me say this much to you. If you love Christ, set to work to *find out what His commandments are*. Study the Scriptures upon every point upon which you have the slightest question. This sacred oracle must guide you.

Next, *be always true to your convictions* about what Christ's commandments are. Carry them out at all hazards, and carry them out at once. It will be wicked to say, "Hitherto I have obeyed, but I shall stop here." We are committed to implicit obedience to the whole of the Master's will, involve what it may. Will you not agree to this at the outset? If you love Him, you will not delay.

Take note of every commandment as it concerns you. Let me mention one or two, and beg you to obey them as you hear them. "Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Is not

this a call to you, my brother, to be a missionary? Do you hear it? Will you not say, "Here am I, send me"? Another person has come into this house tonight full of enmity, somebody has treated him very badly, and he cannot forget it; I pray him to hear the Lord's command, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you; leave there your gift before the altar and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." And again, "Little children, love one another." If any of you are in debt, obey this commandment, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." If you neglect the poor, and live in a miserly way, hear this commandment, "Give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow of you turn not away." At the back of all comes this, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." I might stay here all night, and mention, one after another, the commandments which would be especially applicable to each one of my hearers, but I pray the Holy Spirit to bring all things to your remembrance.

If there is a commandment which you do not relish, it ought to be a warning to you that there is something wrong in your heart that needs setting right. If you ever quarrel with one of Christ's commands, end that quarrel by especially attending to it beyond every other. Do as the miserly man did when he conquered his avarice once for all. He was a Christian, and he promised he would give a pound to the church, but the devil whispered, "You need your money, do not pay." The man stamped his foot, and said, "I will give two." Then the devil said, "Surely you are going mad. Save your money." The man replied that he would not be conquered, he would give four pounds. "Now," said Satan, "you must be insane." Then said the man, "I will give eight, and if you don't stop your tempting, I will give sixteen, for I will not be the slave of covetousness." The point is to throw your whole soul into that very duty wherein you are most tempted to be slack. Jesus does not say, if you love Me, keep this commandment or that, but out of love obey every command.

Many of you do not love my Lord Jesus Christ. I have not preached to you, but that very fact should make you thoughtful. Go home and consider that the preacher said nothing to you because you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot keep His commandments. Write down in black and white—"I do not love the Lord Jesus Christ." If it is really so, be honest enough to make a note of it, and think it over. If you love Jesus, you may joyfully write out, "I love the Lord Jesus. Oh for grace to love Him more!" But if you do not love Him it will be honest to put it upon record. Write it boldly, "I do not love the Lord Jesus Christ." Look at it, and look again, and oh, may God the Holy Spirit lead you to repent of not loving Jesus, who is the altogether lovely One, and the great lover of men's souls! Oh that you may begin to love Him at once! Amen and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 14.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—792, 809, 654.**

FROM MR. SPURGEON AT MENTONE.

From beneath the bright skies of the Riviera the preacher sends his hearty Christian love to all his friends at the Tabernacle, and elsewhere. He has been requested to report himself weekly, and he does so. *All is well.* Repose of mind and heart will speedily restore the waste caused by the wear and tear of perpetual ministry. May God's own blessing be with those who launch out into the deep, and let down their nets for a draught; and out of His immeasurable fullness may the Lord also grant a portion of blessing to those who have gone out of their boats, and are mending their nets! Supplication was offered for the preacher, that he might leave all his many works in the hand of the Great Father, and have no anxiety about them. He does so leave them; but he asks prayer that the Lord may see fit to prosper them all to His own glory. Oh that a revival would begin at the Tabernacle while the preacher is away! Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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